

Sheriff Sigifredo Gonzalez, Jr.
Zapata County, Texas
Chairman, Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition

Thursday, March 2nd, A.D. 2006

Written Testimony on
***“Outgunned and Outmanned: Local Law Enforcement Confronts
Violence Along the Southern Border”***

Before the
House Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims
And
Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security

Chairmen Hostettler and Coble, Ranking Members Jackson-Lee and Scott, and Members of the Subcommittees, it is an honor and a privilege to be invited to appear before these subcommittees to discuss how we, local law enforcement officers, are confronting violence along the southern border and how we are outgunned and outmanned.

I would like to briefly discuss how the Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition was formed. On April 18th, 2005, I sent out letters to my 15 colleagues whose counties border the Republic of Mexico. In my letter to them I invited them to a meeting to discuss unique problems that we face along the border. This was done out of frustration in what I felt was the inadequacy of our federal government to protect our border in preventing a potential terrorist from entering our country. I felt that as a citizen of this great country, our almost 2,000 miles of border was very porous, that many people whose intentions were unknown were coming into our country to perhaps commit acts in our own country similar to or worse than what happened on September 11, 2001, where over 3,000 innocent persons lost their lives. All of us expressed the same frustration since we had mentioned this many times to federal and state legislators. We felt that perhaps speaking as one voice we would be heard.

On May 4th, 2005, we met in Laredo, Texas. As a result we formed the Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition. The first and foremost priority of our coalition is protecting all residents of this country against a terrorist act without regard to race, sex, or ethnic origin. We continue to believe that many persons have entered our country with intentions of harming us. We continue to believe that terrorists have expressed an interest and a desire to exploit the existing vulnerabilities in our border security to enter or attack the United States. We are sincere when we tell you that we are not blaming the agents of the United States Border Patrol, ICE, or any other federal agency, but, rather, we criticize the policies that they have to adhere to.

I do want to make you aware that the experience of the member sheriffs of this coalition total almost 460 years including 101 years of experience as sheriffs. The longest serving sheriff of this coalition is El Paso County Sheriff Leo Samaniego with 22 years. I have attached the list of member sheriffs of the coalition with their years of experience and have marked it as Attachment #1.

I have been asked to briefly relate to you some of the problems that we have encountered along the border, specifically the violence along the border and how we are confronting it, in particular, how we are outgunned and outmanned. Most of the sheriffs that have encountered these problems that I will present are present to answer any questions you may have as they relate to their counties. The sixteen sheriffs, whose counties border the Republic of Mexico employ under 700 patrol officers, are responsible for 39,764 square miles, and 1,276 miles of wide open, porous, and unprotected border with Mexico.

We were used to seeing many persons enter the country illegally; however, recently, many of these persons are no longer entering the country to look for legitimate

employment. We are now seeing that many of these persons are members of ruthless and violent gangs. All of us are concerned that the border with Mexico is being used as the front door to this country. Many of the illegal immigrants from countries of special interest are apprehended along the southwest border. I have attached two lists documenting the apprehensions along the northern border and the southwest border and have marked them as Attachment #2.

Through intelligence information we have also learned that several murders in Laredo, Webb County, Texas, have been orchestrated by members of drug cartels operating in both countries. These drug cartel enforcers cross the Rio Grande River, illegally, commit their murders in the United States, then go back to Mexico, again, via the Rio Grande River. They are very well armed and are very accurate in what their assignment is. We have all seen in the media the reports of the murders in Nuevo Laredo, 30 so far in the first 53 days of 2006. Some of the deaths in Laredo, Texas, are also attributed to these cartels. Last month, a Task Force in Laredo confiscated IEDs and other items used to make explosive devices. We feel that it is the intention of these cartels to use these weapons against us at the appropriate time.

Border Patrol agents and deputy sheriffs are shot at from Mexico on a routine basis. In January, there was a sniper in Mexico shooting at agents that were working along the banks of the river in the area of the cities of Rio Bravo/El Cenizo, which are located south of Laredo. This continued, sporadically, for three days. Agents reported seeing several individuals wearing military style uniforms on a hill on the Mexican side one of them was using what was believed to be a high powered rifle with scope. This sniper was arrested last week and is now in United States custody.

On January 23, 2006, in Hudspeth County, Texas, state officers and deputy sheriffs pursued three vehicles laden with marihuana. These vehicles fled back into Mexico by driving across the Rio Grande River. One of them got stuck in the mud. When officers reached the levee of the Rio Grande River, they encountered what officers described as a Mexican Humvee equipped with a machine gun and what officers believe to be Mexican soldiers, fully armed with automatic weapons, waiting for these vehicles to cross back into Mexico. These officers on the United States side possessed no automatic weapons.

Several days after this incident, three men drove across the Rio Grande River and drove to the home of one of the deputies of Hudspeth County. They told the deputy's wife to tell her husband to stay away from the river or else. They then drove back to Mexico via the Rio Grande River. This was a direct threat against a law enforcement officer by known drug thugs from Mexico.

The cartels operating in Mexico and the United States have demonstrated that the weapons they possess can and will be used in protecting their caches. One informant familiar with the operations of this cartel mentioned to us that the weapons we use are water guns compared to what we will have to come up against if we ever have to. These cartels, known to frequently cross into the United States, possess and use automatic

weapons, grenades, and grenade launchers. They are also experts in explosives, wiretapping, counter-surveillance, lock-picking, and GPS technology. They are able to monitor our office, home, and cellular phone conversations. The original members of this cartel were trained in the United States by our own government. I have attached photographs showing some of the weapons that these cartels possess. The photos have been marked as Attachment #3.

The Rio Grande Valley, Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr Counties, have continuous problems with pseudo-cops coming from Mexico to extort and kidnap citizens in these counties. This area is the fastest growing area in the nation. They have seen their share of terrorist activity as it relates to the migration of many members of ruthless gangs that come into this country for reasons other than legitimate employment. Sometime last year, a woman was taken off an airplane at the McAllen, Texas, airport. She had come in from Mexico, through the river, as her clothing was still wet, and had a passport from it is my understanding, Africa. She was from a special interest country and had come in to Mexico using a passport from a friendly country to avoid detection. Who knows what her intentions were. Thanks to an officer at the airport she was taken off the plane.

During this same time period, a high-ranking member of the *Mara Salvatrucha*, or MS-13, was apprehended in the Brooks County area, also in south Texas. He had entered the country illegally. This MS-13 member is believed to have been responsible for the killing of close to 30 persons, or more, in a bus explosion in his native country. These people, as many others, find it very easy to come into our country through a very porous, wide-open, and unprotected border.

We recently received information that the cartels immediately across our border are planning on killing as many police officers as possible on the United States side. This is being planned for the purpose of attempting to “scare us” away from the border. They have the money, equipment, and stamina to do it. They are determined to save their “load”. It is very possible, these cartels may form a nexus with members of Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. The Department of Homeland Security recently issued Officer Alerts warning their agents of the potential threats. We, the local officers, learned about it through the news media.

Local, state, and federal officers have found many items along the banks of the Rio Grande River that indicate possible ties to terrorist organizations or members of military units of Mexico. Currency and clothing are common finds. Recently, a jacket with patches was found in Jim Hogg County, Texas, by agents of U. S. Border Patrol. The patches on the jacket show an Arabic military badge with one depicting an airplane flying over a building and heading towards a tower, and another showing an image of a lion’s head with wings and a parachute emanating from the animal (lion). It is believed from an undisclosed document that Department of Homeland Security translators concluded that the patches read “defense center”, “minister of defense”, or “defense headquarters”. The bottom of one patch read “martyr”, “way to eternal life” or “way to immortality”. I have attached copies of these patches and have marked them as Attachment #4.

On January 28th, 2006, USBP Chief David Aguilar was asked by a reporter from KGNS television station in Laredo, Texas, what the outcome of the investigation of the jacket was. Chief Aguilar responded that the patches were not from Al Qaeda but from countries Al Qaeda was know to operate.

On February 2nd of this year, one of my deputies discovered an 18” duffel bag approximately 8 miles North of Zapata by the highway right of way. This duffel bag had “Armada de Mexico” embroidered on the bag. Inside the bag were several items that are commonly used by persons that are knowledgeable in bodybuilding, in staying in good physical shape, and used to physical exertion. A bus ticket with an origin of Veracruz, Mexico was also found inside the bag. Although I am not insinuating that the person carrying this bag was a member or former member of the Mexican Navy, but there is a naval academy in Veracruz. I have attached photographs of the duffel bag and marked it as Attachment #5. The copy of the bus ticket found inside the duffel bag is also attached and marked as Attachment #6.

Employees of our offices have also seen incursions into this country of persons dressed in battle dress uniforms (BDUs), carrying what officers believe to be automatic weapons, very clean cut, and in very good physical condition. On March 3rd, 2005, several officers assigned to do surveillance by the Rio Grande River by the Zapata/Webb County line observed approximately 20-25 persons dressed as indicated above walking on a gravel road, coming from the area of the riverbanks, marching in a cadence. The deputy observed these individuals through his borrowed night vision goggles. These individuals were carrying large duffel bags and walking two abreast. They also had backpacks.

In the town site of Zapata, residents are always reporting individuals getting off boats. These individuals also wear BDUs, backpacks, and possess weapons. The residents describe them as soldiers.

On January 9th, 2006, a USDA Tick Inspector encountered 17 individuals in Zapata County that had just been crossed into the United States. Three of these individuals had in their possession assault type long arms. The Inspector noticed that these individuals were not from Mexico but from another country since they spoke Spanish with an accent that is not common in Mexico. These individuals threatened to kill the Inspector. The Inspector had his issued gun and badge under his coat where it was not seen by these persons. He felt that this probably saved his life. I have attached a copy of a DHS Officer Safety Alert dated January 20, 2006 and have marked it as Attachment #7.

We have recently learned that a certain cartel has put out a threat against law enforcement officials, specifically all DPS Troopers in Rio Grande City, TX. This threat was made in response to the shooting of a 23-year-old by a DPS Trooper on January 14, 2006. It is believed that the deceased may have been a member or associate of this cartel. Information also indicates that this cartel will be expanding their operations to the

Maverick and Val Verde Counties in the very near future. These counties will see a surge in violence, kidnappings, and extortions just as we have seen in border counties in the southern part of Texas.

More and more we are seeing armed individuals entering our country through our counties. We feel that it is a matter of time before a shootout will occur. During the Hudspeth County incident officers pulled out cameras instead of weapons. In the unfortunate event of a shootout, federal, state, and local officers along the southwest border are not adequately armed. Compared to the ruthless and brazen and open behavior of the cartels we face, we are most certainly outmanned. In most counties, deputies ride alone while patrolling. Jeff Davis County has only a sheriff and three deputies to patrol the 2,267 square miles of that county. Brewster County, the largest county in Texas with 6,193 miles, has only 6 deputy sheriffs to patrol the county. In the event of a shootout, many casualties will likely occur. Federal, state, and local officers all along the southwest border of the United States are outgunned and outmanned.

The Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition is very concerned of the very unique problems along our border. Border Patrol is doing the best they can with the resources that are available to them. Immediate help is needed for them and for Texas border sheriffs and for the protection of our country. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee has introduced HR 4044, the Rapid Response Border Protection Act of 2005. This piece of legislation will assist in enhancing border patrol personnel along the border. Ranking Member Jackson-Lee is concerned with the problems along the southwest border, just as every member of this committee is.

Congressman John A. Culberson has also introduced HR 4360, the Border Law Enforcement Act of 2005. This piece of legislation also covers all of the problems that we, as sheriffs, are encountering along the border. Congressman Culberson consulted with us in writing this pending legislation.

We, the Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition, have implemented Operation Linebacker, a second line of defense in the protection of our country. The United States Border Patrol being the first line of defense. The problems along the border are federal problems. Our governor, the Honorable Rick Perry, could not wait for a peace officer to get killed along the border. He, just as we, is very much concerned. He has appropriated \$6 million as seed money for us to start the operation. Just last month Governor Perry granted our Coalition an additional \$3.8 million. The problems along the border will continue unless our federal government intervenes soon. Must we wait until an officer gets killed or until after another terrorist act?

I want to express my most sincere appreciation for allowing us the opportunity to appear before you and thank you for the work you do for our country, the United States of America.

Chairmen Coble and Hostettler, this concludes my statement. I will be pleased to answer any questions that you or Members of the Committee may have.

Texas Border Sheriff's Experience

COUNTY	SHERIFF	YRS.- SHERIFF	YRS.- OTHER	YRS.- TOTAL
El Paso	Leo Samaniego	22	28	50
Hudspeth	Arvin West	6	17	23
Culberson	Oscar E. Carrillo	6	10	16
Jeff Davis	Thomas "Tom" F. Roberts, Sr.	1	21	22
Presidio	Danny C. Dominguez	9	5	14
Brewster	Ronny D. Dodson	6	19	25
Terrell	William "Clint" McDonald, Jr.	2	18	20
Val Verde	A D'Wayne Jernigan	9	33	42
Kinney	Leland K. Burgess	10	30	40
Maverick	Tom Herrera	1	27	28
Dimmit	Michael "Doug" Sample	2.5	28	30.5
Webb	Rick Flores	1	16	17
Zapata	Sigifredo Gonzalez, Jr.	11.5	18	29.5
Starr	Reymundo "Ray" Guerra	8	20	28
Hidalgo	Guadalupe "Lupe" Trevino	1	29.8	30.8
Cameron	Omar Lucio	5	38	43
	TOTALS	101	357.8	458.8

**OTMS BY COUNTRY 10/01/02 - 6/30/03
NORTHERN & SOUTHERN BORDER**

DATA SOURCE: PAS

Sum of TOTAL OTMS	BORDER		
COUNTRY CODE	Northern Border	Southern Border	Grand Total
AFGHANISTAN	3	1	4
ALBANIA	30	63	93
ALGERIA	2	3	5
ANTIGUA-BARBUDA	1	1	2
ARGENTINA	14	69	83
ARMENIA	1	17	18
AUSTRALIA	13	6	19
AUSTRIA	1	1	2
BAHAMAS	1	1	2
BAHRAIN		1	1
BANGLADESH	10	7	17
BARBADOS	1		1
BELARUS	2	2	4
BELGIUM	3	3	6
BELIZE	1	23	24
BOLIVIA	2	27	29
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA		1	1
BOTSWANA		1	1
BRAZIL	105	3179	3284
BULGARIA	7	10	17
BURKINA FASO	1		1
BURMA	1	4	5
CAMEROON	1	2	3
CANADA	825	22	847
CAPE VERDE	1		1
CHILE	10	58	68
CHINA PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF	167	222	389
COLOMBIA	23	121	144
CONGO	1		1
COSTA RICA	135	116	251
CROATIA		1	1
CUBA	17	61	78
CZECH REPUBLIC	3	25	28
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	6	4	10
DENMARK		2	2
DJIBOUTI	1		1
DOMINICA	1		1
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	51	276	327
ECUADOR	40	314	354
EGYPT	4	6	10
EL SALVADOR	61	6408	6469
ERITREA	2	3	5
ESTONIA	1	2	3
ETHIOPIA	2	5	7
FIJI	1		1

FRANCE	12	7	19
FRENCH POLYNESIA	1		1
GAMBIA	2	3	5
GEORGIA	5	8	13
GERMANY	13	9	22
GHANA	10	9	19
GREECE	4	1	5
GRENADA	1		1
GUATEMALA	185	4971	5156
GUINEA	1	2	3
GUINEA-BISSAU		1	1
GUYANA	4	15	19
HAITI	9	14	23
HONDURAS	103	9810	9913
HONG KONG	6		6
HUNGARY	3	9	12
INDIA	113	65	178
INDONESIA	12	23	35
IRAN	4	10	14
IRAQ	5	8	13
IRELAND	5	10	15
ISRAEL	28	36	64
ITALY	7	7	14
IVORY COAST		4	4
JAMAICA	36	30	66
JAPAN	9	10	19
JORDAN	2	11	13
KAMPUCHEA	1	2	3
KAZAKHSTAN	4		4
KENYA	11	27	38
KYRGYZSTAN		1	1
LAOS	4	3	7
LATVIA		2	2
LEBANON	8	8	16
LIBERIA		5	5
LITHUANIA	9	7	16
MACEDONIA	2	23	25
MALAYSIA	7	6	13
MALI	5	1	6
MAURITANIA	1		1
MICRONESIA FEDERATED STATES OF	2		2
MOLDOVA	6	1	7
MONGOLIA	3	2	5
MOROCCO	5	7	12
NEPAL	1	4	5
NETHERLANDS	4	5	9
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES	2		2
NEW ZEALAND	12	4	16
NICARAGUA	7	519	526
NIGERIA	11	21	32
NORTH KOREA	1		1
NORWAY	1	3	4

ATTACHMENT #2

PAKISTAN	122	20	142
PANAMA	3	7	10
PARAGUAY	1	7	8
PERU	33	165	198
PHILIPPINES	10	51	61
POLAND	24	123	147
PORTUGAL	1	1	2
QATAR	2	1	3
ROMANIA	23	11	34
RUSSIA	24	19	43
RWANDA	1		1
SAUDI ARABIA		1	1
SENEGAL	5	3	8
SIERRA LEONE	2		2
SINGAPORE	1		1
SLOVAKIA	9	8	17
SLOVENIA		2	2
SOMALIA	1		1
SOUTH AFRICA	4	8	12
SOUTH KOREA	62	41	103
SPAIN	3	6	9
SRI LANKA	5	2	7
ST. LUCIA	1	1	2
SUDAN	3	4	7
SWEDEN	1	1	2
SWITZERLAND	2		2
SYRIA	4	3	7
TAIWAN	6	4	10
TANZANIA		1	1
THAILAND	4	3	7
TOGO		1	1
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	9	2	11
TUNISIA	1		1
TURKEY	21	10	31
UGANDA	5	2	7
UKRAINE	7	15	22
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	3		3
UNITED KINGDOM	19	16	35
URUGUAY	16	9	25
UZBEKISTAN	8	2	10
VENEZUELA	14	37	51
VIETNAM	10	12	22
WESTERN SAHARA		3	3
YEMEN	3	5	8
YUGOSLAVIA	4	27	31
ZAMBIA	1	2	3
ZIMBABWE	1	1	2
Grand Total	2,718	27,429	30,147

ATTACHMENT #2

Weapons Used by Cartels along the Southwest Border of the United States



ATTACHMENT #3



ATTACHMENT #4



ATTACHMENT #5

MARCA (LINEA) **GL** SERVICIO **EJECUTIVO**

ORIGEN **VEV VERACRUZ** TERMINAL DE SALIDA

DESTINO **M2D MEXICO NORT** TERMINAL DE LLEGADA

FECHA DE SALIDA **13/09/2005 MARTES** ASIENTO **21**

HORA DE SALIDA **23:45 NOCHE** TIPO **ENTERO**

NOVEDAD PRECIO

VICTOR LUIS MUÑOZ VALI **\$308.00**

LUGAR Y FECHA DE EXPEDICION:
 VEV 091205-173428-JAVEGL0021-VN-063714335
 DGL03 000267255 311050

CONSERVE SU BOLETO, ES
 SU SEGURO DE VIAJERO

CAMIONERA DEL GOLFO SA, DECEV 255
 0-25 0267255

3970
 205
 277
 4

7500

TALON DE CONTROL INTERNO, NO DA DERECHO A VIAJAR

MC	FECHA Y HORA	ORIGEN	DESTINO	PRECIO	ASIENTO
05	13/09/2005 23:45	VEV	M2D	\$308.00	21
091205-173428		ENTERO			
311050		VEJAVEGL0021	DGL03		

063714335

Bus Ticket

ATTACHMENT #6

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**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION
OFFICE OF BORDER PATROL**



OFFICER SAFETY ALERT

"Support to the Field"

DATE: 01/20/06 [REDACTED]

Purpose: The purpose of the Field Intelligence Center Officer Safety Alert is to provide the Field with timely notification of specific threats or events, which may potentially endanger or impact on Agent Safety.

USDA TICK RIDER INSPECTOR REPORTS ENCOUNTER WITH HEAVILY ARMED GROUP IN THE LAREDO A.O.R.

SYNOPSIS: On January 9th, 2006 a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Tick Rider Inspector reported to have encountered a group of 17 individuals on the U.S. side along the Rio Grande River. The Tick Rider stated that three in the group were armed with "assault rifles". The Tick Rider spoke to one of the armed individuals, who was reported to speak Spanish, but with an accent other than a Mexican national.

(FOUO) A USDA Tick Rider Inspector (TRI) informed Border Patrols Agents that he had encountered three armed subjects with assault rifles near the Dolores creek area. He said that this encounter happened on January 9, 2006 at approximately 0900 hrs. TRI stated that he saw a boat drop off a large group of individuals just upriver from the Dolores Creek area. TRI stated that he was patrolling the river on horseback when his dogs started barking at this group. He said that he rode up to the area where he encountered a group of about 17 individuals. TRI said that the group was on the upriver side at the end of the Dolores Creek on Hwy 83 south, a few miles south of the Webb/Zapata county line. TRI stated that when he approached the area, one subject was carrying what appeared to be an automatic assault rifle in the ready position. TRI said that the subject asked him what he was doing in the area.

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(FOUO) TRI stated that he told the subject that he was just ranching in the area. TRI stated that the subject said he was about to shoot his dogs. TRI told the subject that the dogs would not harm them, and that there was no need to shoot his dogs.

(FOUO) TRI was carrying his service issued badge and firearm, but his jacket covered them up. TRI stated that he believed that this might have saved his life, due to the fact that the subjects could not identify him as being a law enforcement agent.

(FOUO) TRI advised he saw two other subjects come out of the brush that were carrying what appeared to be automatic assault rifles as well. In total he said that there were about 17 people and three of the subjects had rifles. TRI stated that all the subjects were carrying "back packs".

(FOUO) TRI stated that the subject he was talking to spoke the Spanish language, but this individual had a different accent than that of a Mexican National. TRI believed that most, if not all of the subjects, were from a country other than Mexico. TRI stated that the subject he was talking to had a very dark complexion. TRI stated that the riflemen were wearing civilian clothing, but that he noticed one of the subjects was wearing combat boots. TRI stated that the group appeared to be "brush walkers", but that he did not see anything that appeared to be narcotics.

(FOUO) **BORFIC NOTES:** TRI reported that most, if not all, of the 17 individuals appeared to be from a country other than Mexico and stated that the rifleman he talked to spoke Spanish but had another accent other than that of a Mexican National. During BORFIC incident follow-up, B.P. Agent [REDACTED], author of [REDACTED], advised that the TRI grew up along the mentioned stretch of the Rio Grande River and has been a USDA Tick Rider Inspector in the area for many years. B.P. Agent Wood advised that the TRI speaks and understands the Spanish language fluently (like a native of Mexico), and is extremely knowledgeable of daily life along the river, both on the U.S. and Mexican side. B.P. Agent [REDACTED] advised that the TRI would be able to identify that the individuals he observed were not Mexican Nationals, and definitely able to identify that the accent of the individual he spoke too was not that of a Mexican National. Agent Wood advised the 17 individuals encountered by the TRI were most likely from Central America. The probability that the 17 observed individuals were not Mexican Nationals, but citizens of Central America is of concern for the following reasons. A BORFIC Officer Safety Alert [REDACTED] and dated 11/30/2005 titled: **Report of Armed MS13 Gang Members Involved in Illegal Alien Smuggling Activities** references information from [REDACTED] which states that MS13 members were recently reported to be armed while engaged in illegal alien smuggling activities in the Laredo AOR. Also, recent open source and law enforcement reporting suggests that ex-Guatemalan Kaibiles have been reported to be working with drug smuggling organizations in the

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Nuevo Laredo area. Due to the TRI's descriptions, it is possible that the three encountered armed individuals could have been MS13 gang members or ex-Kaibiles.

(FOUO) Agent [REDACTED] advised of two other recent incidents. One involved a report by guards at a private prison, which is located approximately twenty miles away from where the above Tick Rider incident occurred. During this incident prison guards reported seeing a group of individuals being lead through the brush near the prison by persons reported to be carrying rifles.

(FOUO) Another incident involving a Tick Rider occurred on 01/10/2006 reference [REDACTED]. A "Tick Rider" in the Mc Allen AOR reported hearing automatic gunfire on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande River while patrolling along the Rio Grande River (between Adams Garden Canal and Galveston Bend).

(FOUO) A rash of armed incidents targeting Border Patrol have recently been reported along the Texas/Mexico border:

- MCA-[REDACTED] – On 01/10/2006, during an aborted drug smuggling attempt along the Rio Grande River that was observed by Border Patrol agents, shots were fired from what sounded like a semi-automatic weapon from the Mexican side of the river. The shots sounded to have been fired into the air in an attempt to keep the Agents away from the area.
- MCA-[REDACTED] – On 01/04/2006 Border Patrol agents driving a marked service vehicle were sign cutting along the Rio Grande River and heard shots being fired from the Mexican side of the river. Agents heard rounds going overhead and striking brush near by. One round (or a ricochet) struck and dented the driver's side door.
- MCA-[REDACTED] – On 12/30/2005, during river patrol, two Border Patrol boats were fired upon, with one receiving hits. Agents estimated 20 to 25 rounds were fired at them. The shots were reported to have been fired from the Mexican side of the river.
- LRT-[REDACTED] – On 12/28/2005, during the arrests of four illegal aliens, Border Patrol agents were fired upon from the Mexican side of the river. The shooter appeared to be pointing a rifle at agents.
- MCA-[REDACTED] – On 05/12/2005, during an aborted drug smuggling attempt along the Rio Grande River, responding Border Patrol agents noticed a subject on the south riverbank standing next to a black Jeep Cherokee, bearing unreadable Texas license plates, and another subject climbing down from a

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nearby tree. The subject climbing down from the tree appeared to be carrying a high caliber rifle with a "large" scope.

(FOUO) Recent reporting suggests that some smuggling organizations have or are contemplating escalating the use of violence against Border Patrol along the southern border:

- [REDACTED] – On 01/18/2006 EPT SIU interviewed a detained MS13 member who claimed to have knowledge of MS13 formulating plans to use firearms and confront Border Patrol Agents in order to create a distraction so that other MS-13 members can be smuggled in the United States. MS13 member (who claims to have worked smuggling cocaine for the Gulf Cartel) claims to have knowledge that the plan is to start amassing members of MS-13 along the U.S./Mexico border at cities such as Nuevo Laredo, Acuna, Ojinaga, and Juarez. After enough members have been pre-positioned along the border, a coordinated attack using firearms was to commence against all law enforcement, to include Border Patrol. The plan is to kill as many law enforcement officials as possible, create a diversion, and affect the entry of multiple MS-13 members. MS-13's ultimate goal is to cause significant chaos and to begin gaining control of areas, cities and regions within the U.S.
- BORFIC Officer Safety Alert # [REDACTED] dated 01/13/2006 – referenced information from the Marfa SIU provided by ICE via a source of information (SOI) stating that a smuggler named MERCADO, Pablo (AKA: El Patron) has ordered smugglers to carry firearms. The SOI stated that this is a result of increased enforcement efforts. MERCADO stated that the lost loads of contraband are costing him and that the loss of loads will no longer be tolerated. (This may be occurring along the entire Texas/Mexico border).
- BORFIC Officer Safety Alert # [REDACTED] dated 12/21/2005 – references information from TECS report [REDACTED] stating source of unknown reliability advised unidentified Mexican alien smugglers are angry about the increased security along the U.S./Mexico border, and have agreed that the best way to deal with U.S. border patrol agents is to hire a group of contract killers. The alien smugglers intend to smuggle MS-13 gang members into the United States for the sole purpose of killing U.S. border patrol agents (NFI).
- BORFIC Officer Safety Alert # [REDACTED] dated 12/07/2005 – references information from an anonymous source indicates that drug smugglers are employing armed mara salvatrucha gang members in the Nogales AOR to protect their loads, and one member reportedly fired shots from the Mexican side at Border Patrol Agents during a drug seizure incident along the border.